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Scholarship and criticism in the United States

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Scholarship and Criticism in the United States

BY

J. E. SPINGARN

Reprinted from "Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans"

NEW YORK
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1922

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SCHOLARSHIP AND CRITICISM

IT is natural for the musician to think any land barbarous if it has produced no great composers, the painter if it has produced no great painters, the critic or the scholar if it has produced no great scholars and critics, and so on for all the other arts and sciences. But it is idle to insist that every race should express itself in the same way, or to assume that the genius of a nation can be tested by its deficiencies in any single field of the higher life. Great critics are rare in every age and country; and even if they were not, what consolation is there for the clash and diversity of races and nations except the special and diverse gifts which each may furnish to the spiritual whole? England has achieved greatness without great music, Germany without great sculpture, ancient Rome without great science or philosophy, Judæa with little but poetry and religion; and it is not necessary to lay too much stress on our own lack of great scholars and great critics—yes, even on our lack of great poets and great painters. They may come to-day or to-morrow, or we may be destined never to have them. The idea that great national energy must inevitably flower in a great literature, and that our wide-flung power must certainly find expression in an immortal poem or in the "great American novel," is merely another example of our mechanical optimism. The vision of great empires that have been both strong and silent, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, haunts all history; Virgil or Camoens only fitfully expresses the power that is summed up in Cæsar or Magellan.

But without insisting on impossible aims or illusory standards of greatness, it is fair to ask some flow of spiritual activity, some general spirit of diffused culture,—in a word, the presence of a soul. For though we must eat (and common sense will cook better dinners than philosophy), though we must work (and the captain of industry can organize trade better than the poet), though we must play (and the athlete can win more games than the scholar), the civilization that has no

higher outlets for its intellect and imagination will show at least some marks of spiritual starvation. You may see the signs of its restless gnawing on the face of almost any American woman beyond the first flush of youth; you may see some shadow of its hopeless craving on the face of almost any mature American man.

The same signs are to be seen in American scholarship and American criticism. If scholarship were what most people think it, the dull learning of pedants, and criticism merely the carping and bickering of fault-finders, the fact would hardly be worth recording. But since they are instruments which the mind of man uses for some of its keenest questionings, their absence or their weakness must indicate something at least in the national life and character which it is not unimportant to understand.

I

The tradition of scholarship, like so many other things, comes to us from what used to be called the Renaissance, the period (it may not be ironical to be reminded) in which the Americas were discovered and explored; and whatever savour of distinction inheres in the idea of " the gentleman and the scholar " was created then. Scholarship at first meant merely a knowledge of the classics, and though it has since widened its scope, even then the diversity of its problems was apparent, for the classical writers had tilled many fields of human knowledge, and the student of Homer and Virgil was really faced with a different problem from the student of Plato or Thucydides. Scholarship has never been a reality, a field that could be bounded and defined in the sense in which poetry, philosophy, and history can be. It is a point of view, an attitude, a method of approach, and, so far as its meaning and purpose can be captured, it may be said to be the discipline and illumination that come from the intellectual mastery of a definite problem involved in the growth of the human spirit.

Scholarship, conceived in this sense, has no history (though dull and learned hodge-podges have served as such), for it is a spirit diffused over various fields of study; and in America

this spirit has scarcely even come into existence. American Universities seem to have been created for the special purpose of ignoring or destroying it. The chief monuments of American scholarship have seldom if ever come from men who have been willing to live their whole lives in an academic atmosphere. The men whom we think of as our foremost literary scholars, Gildersleeve, Norton, and the rest, acquired their fame rather through their personalities than their scholarly achievements. The historians, Motley, Prescott, Bancroft, Parkman, Rhodes, Lea, Fiske, Mahan, were not professors; books like Taylor's "Mediæval Mind," Henry Adams's "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres," Thayer's "Cavour," Villard's "John Brown," and Beveridge's "John Marshall," even Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature," were not written within University walls, though Ticknor's sixteen years of teaching tamed the work of a brilliant man of the world until there is little left save the characteristic juiceless virtue of an intelligent ordering of laborious research. It would seem as if in the atmosphere of our Universities personality could not find fruitage in scholarly achievement worthy of it, and learning can only thrive when it gives no hostages to the enemy, personality.

Of the typical products of this academic system, the lowest is perhaps the literary dissertation and the highest the historical manual or text-book. It may be because history is not my own special field of study that I seem to find its practitioners more vigorous intellectually than the literary scholars. Certainly our historians seem to have a special aptitude for compiling careful summaries of historical periods, and some of these have an ordered reasonableness and impersonal efficiency not unlike that of the financial accounting system of our large trusts or the budgets of our large universities. To me most of them seem feats of historical engineering rather than of historical scholarship; and if they represent a scholarly "advance" on older and less accurate work, written before Clio became a peon of the professors, it can only be said that history has not yet recovered from the advance. Nor am I as much impressed as the historians themselves by the more recent clash between the "old" school and the "new," for both seem to me equally lacking in a truly philosophic conception of the mean-

ing of history. Yet there is among the younger breed a certain freshness of mind and an openness to new ideas, though less to the problems of human personality or to the emotional and spiritual values of man's life. This deficiency is especially irritating in the field of biography. Not even an American opera (*corruptio optimi*) is as wooden as the biographies of our statesmen and national heroes; and if American lives written by Englishmen have been received with enthusiasm, it was less because of any inherent excellence than because they at least conceived of Hamilton or Lincoln as a man and not as an historical document or a political platitude.

But literary scholarship is in far worse plight in our Universities. No great work of classical learning has ever been achieved by an American scholar. It may be unfair to suggest comparison with men like Gilbert Murray, Croiset, or Wilamowitz; but how can we be persuaded by the professors or even by a dean that all culture will die if we forget Greek and Latin, until they satisfy us by their own work that they themselves are alive? Asia beckons to us with the hand of Fate, but Oriental scholarship is a desert through which a few nomadic professors wander aimlessly. As to the literatures in the modern European tongues, Dante scholarship has perhaps the oldest and most respectable tradition, but on examination dwindles into its proper proportions: an essay by Lowell and translations by Longfellow and Norton pointed the way; a Dante Society has nursed it; and its modern fruits, with one or two honourable exceptions, are a few unilluminating articles and text-books. Ticknor's pioneer work in the Spanish field has had no successors, though Spanish America is at our doors; the generous subsidies of rich men have resulted as usual in buildings but not in scholarship. Of the general level of our French and German studies I prefer to say nothing; and silence is also wisest in the case of English. This field fairly teems with professors; Harvard has twice as many as Oxford and Cambridge combined, and the University of Chicago almost as many as the whole of England. Whether this plethora of professors has justified itself, either by distinguished works of scholarship or by helping young America to love literature and to write good English, I shall not decide, but

leave entirely to their own conscience. This at least may be said, that the mole is not allowed to burrow in his hole without disturbance; for in this atmosphere, as a protest and counterfoil, or as a token of submission to the idols of the marketplace, there has arisen a very characteristic academic product, —the professor who writes popular articles, sometimes clever, sometimes precious, sometimes genteel and refined, sometimes merely commonplace, but almost always devoid of real knowledge or stimulating thought. Even the sober pedant is a more humane creature than the professorial smart-Aleck.

Whence arises this inhibition of mediocrity, this fear of personality and intellect, this deep antinomy of pedant and dilettante? The " fear-of-giving-themselves-away disease " which affected the professors of the Colleges of Unreason in " Erewhon " is mildly endemic in every University in the world, and to a certain degree in every profession; but nowhere else does it give the tone to the intellectual life of a whole people. If I were a sociologist, confident that the proper search would unearth an external cause for every spiritual defect, I might point to any one of a dozen or more damning facts as the origin and source of all our trouble,—to the materialism of a national life directed solely toward practical ends, to the levelling and standardizing influences of democracy, to Anglo-Saxon " Colonialism," to the influence of German erudition, or to the inadequate economic rewards of the academic life. I should probably make much of that favourite theme of critical fantasy, the habits derived from the " age of the pioneers," a period in which life, with its mere physical discomforts and its mere demands on physical energy and endurance, was really so easy and simple that Americans attempt to reproduce it on all their holidays.

But in so far as they have any reality, all these are merely symptoms of the same disease of the soul. The modern sanatorium may be likened to the mediæval monastery without its spiritual faith; the American University to a University without its inner illumination. It is an intellectual refuge without the integration of a central soul,—crassly material because it has no inner standards to redeem it from the idols of the marketplace, or timid and anæmic because it lacks that quixotic fire

which inheres in every act of faith. It is at one and the same time our greatest practical achievement and our greatest spiritual failure. To call it a compound of sanatorium and machine-shop may seem grossly unfair to an institution which has more than its share of earnest and high-minded men; but though the phrase may not describe the reality, it does indicate the danger. When we find that in such a place education does not educate, we cry for help to the only gods we know, the restless gods of Administration and Organization; but scholarship cannot be organized or administered into existence, even by Americans.

What can we say (though it seem to evade the question) save that America has no scholarship because as yet it has a body but no soul? The scholar goes through all the proper motions,—collects facts, organizes research, delivers lectures, writes articles and sometimes books,—but under this outer seeming there is no inner reality. Under all the great works of culture there broods the quivering soul of tradition, a burden sometimes disturbing and heavy to bear, but more often helping the soul to soar on wings not of its own making. We think hungrily that the freshness of outlook of a young people should be more than compensation; but the freshness is not there. Bad habits long persisted in, or new vices painfully acquired, may pass for traditions among some spokesmen of "Americanism," but will not breathe the breath of life into a national culture. All is shell, mask, and a deep inner emptiness. We have scholars without scholarship, as there are churches without religion.

Until there comes a change of heart or a new faith or a deep inner searching, scholarship must continue to live this thwarted and frustrated life. Only a profound realization of its high purpose and special function, and the pride that comes from this realization, can give the scholar his true place in an American world. For this special function is none other than to act as the devoted servant of thought and imagination and to champion their claims as the twin pillars that support all the spiritual activities of human life,—art, philosophy, religion, science; and these it must champion against all the materialists under whatever name they disguise their purpose. What

matter whether they be scientists who decry "dialectics," or sociologists who sneer at "mere belles-lettres," or practical men who have no use for the "higher life"? Whether they be called bourgeois or radical, conservative or intellectual, —all who would reduce life to a problem of practical activity and physical satisfaction, all who would reduce intellect and imagination to mere instruments of practical usefulness, all who worship dead idols instead of living gods, all who grasp at every flitting will-o'-the-wisp of theory or sensation,—all these alike scholarship must forever recognize as its enemies and its chief tempters.

II

Scholarship, so conceived, is the basis of criticism. When a few years ago I published a volume which bore the subtitle of "Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste," the pedants and the professors were in the ascendant, and it seemed necessary to emphasize the side of criticism which was then in danger, the side that is closest to the art of the creator. But the professors have been temporarily routed by the dilettanti, the amateurs, and the journalists, who treat a work of the imagination as if they were describing fireworks or a bull-fight (to use a phrase of Zola's about Gautier); and so it is necessary now to insist on the discipline and illumination of scholarship, —in other words, to write an "Essay on the Divergence of Criticism and Creation."

American criticism, like that of England, but to an even greater extent, suffers from a want of philosophic insight and precision. It has neither inherited nor created a tradition of æsthetic thought. For it every critical problem is a separate problem, a problem in a philosophic vacuum, and so open for discussion to any astute mind with a taste for letters. Realism, classicism, romanticism, imagism, impressionism, expressionism, and other terms or movements as they spring up, seem ultimate realities instead of matters of very subordinate concern to any philosophy of art,—mere practical programmes which bear somewhat the same relation to æsthetic truth that the platform of the Republican Party bears to Aristotle's "Poli-

tics " or Marx's " Capital." As a result, critics are constantly carrying on a guerilla warfare of their own in favour of some vague literary shibboleth or sociological abstraction, and discovering anew the virtues or vices of individuality, modernity, Puritanism, the romantic spirit or the spirit of the Middle West, the traditions of the pioneer, and so on ad infinitum. This holds true of every school of American criticism, " conservative " or " radical "; for all of them a disconnected body of literary theories takes the place of a real philosophy of art. " Find an idea and then write about it " sums up the American conception of criticism. Now, while the critic must approach a work of literature without preconceived notion of what that individual work should attempt, he cannot criticize it without some understanding of what all literature attempts. The critic without an æsthetic is a mariner without chart, compass, or knowledge of navigation; for the question is not where the ship should go or what cargo it should carry, but whether it is going to arrive at any port at all without sinking.

Criticism is essentially an expression of taste, or that faculty of imaginative sympathy by which the reader or spectator is able to re-live the vision created by the artist. This is the soil without which it cannot flourish; but it attains its end and becomes criticism in the highest sense only when taste is guided by knowledge and thought. Of these three elements, implicit in all real criticism, the professors have made light of taste, and have made thought itself subservient to knowledge, while the dilettanti have considered it possible to dispense with both knowledge and thought. But even dilettante criticism is preferable to the dogmatic and intellectualist criticism of the professors, on the same grounds that Sainte-Beuve is superior to Brunetière, or Hazlitt to Francis Jeffrey; for the dilettante at least meets the mind of the artist on the plane of imagination and taste, while the intellectualist or moralist is precluded by his temperament and his theories from ever understanding the primal thrill and purpose of the creative act.

Back of any philosophy of art there must be a philosophy of life, and all æsthetic formulæ seem empty unless there is richness of content behind them. The critic, like the poet or the philosopher, has the whole world to range in, and the far-

ther he ranges in it, the better his work will be. Yet this does not mean that criticism should focus its attention on morals, history, life, instead of on the forms into which the artist transforms them. Art has something else to give us; and to seek morals, or economic theories, or the national spirit in it is to seek morals, economic theories, the national spirit, but not art. Indeed, the United States is the only civilized country where morals are still in controversy so far as creative literature is concerned; France, Germany, and Italy liberated themselves from this faded obsession long ago; even in England critics of authority hesitate to judge a work of art by moral standards. Yet this is precisely what divides the two chief schools of American criticism, the moralists and the anti-moralists, though even among the latter masquerade some whose only quarrel with the moralists is the nature of the moral standards employed.

Disregarding the Coleridgean tradition, which seems to have come to an end with Mr. Woodberry, and the influence of the "new psychology," which has not yet taken a definite form, the main forces that have influenced the present clashes in the American attitude toward literature seem to be three. There is first of all the conception of literature as a moral influence, a conception which goes back to the Græco-Roman rhetoricians and moralists, and after pervading English thought from Sidney to Matthew Arnold, finds its last stronghold to-day among the American descendants of the Puritans. There is, secondly, the Shavian conception of literature as the most effective vehicle for a new *Weltanschauung,* to be judged by the novelty and freshness of its ideas, a conception particularly attractive to the school of young reformers, radicals, and intellectuals whose interest in the creative imagination is secondary, and whose training in æsthetic thought has been negligible; this is merely an obverse of the Puritan moralism, and is tainted by the same fundamental misconception of the meaning of the creative imagination. And there is finally the conception of literature as an external thing, a complex of rhythms, charm, beauty without inner content, or mere theatrical effectiveness, which goes back through the English 'nineties to the French 'seventies, when the idea of the independence of art

from moral and intellectual standards was distorted into the merely mechanical theory of "art for art's sake"; the French have a special talent for narrowing æsthetic truths into hard-and-fast formulæ, devoid of their original nucleus of philosophic reality, but all the more effective on this account for universal conquest as practical programmes.

The apparent paradox which none of these critics face is that the *Weltanschauung* of the creative artist, his moral convictions, his views on intellectual, economic, and other subjects, furnish the content of his work and are at the same time the chief obstacles to his artistic achievement. Out of morals or philosophy he has to make, not morals or philosophy, but poetry; for morals and philosophy are only a part, and a small part, of the whole reality which his imagination has to encompass. The man who is overwhelmed with moral theories and convictions would naturally find it easiest to become a moralist, and moralists are prosaic, not poetic. A man who has strong economic convictions would find it easiest to become an economist or economic reformer, and economics too is the prose of life, not the poetry. A man with a strong philosophic bias would find it easiest to become a pure thinker, and the poet's visionary world topples when laid open to the cold scrutiny of logic. A poet is a human being, and therefore likely to have convictions, prejudices, preconceptions, like other men; but the deeper his interest in them is, the easier it is for him to become a moralist, economist, philosopher, or what not, and the harder for him to transcend them and to become a poet. But if the genius of the poet (and by poet I mean any writer of imaginative literature) is strong enough, it will transcend them, pass over them by the power of the imagination, which leaves them behind without knowing it. It has been well said that morals are one reality, a poem is another reality, and the illusion consists in thinking them one and the same. The poet's conscience as a man may be satisfied by the illusion, but woe to him if it is not an illusion, for that is what we tell him when we say, "He is a moralist, not a poet." Such a man has really expressed his moral convictions, instead of leaping over and beyond them into that world of the imagination where moral ideas must be interpreted from

the standpoint of poetry, or the artistic needs of the characters portrayed, and not by the logical or reality value of morals.

This " leaping over " is the test of all art; it is inherent in the very nature of the creative imagination. It explains, for example, how Milton the moralist started out to make Satan a demon and how Milton the poet ended by making him a hero. It explains the blindness of the American critic who recently objected to the " loose thinking " of a poem of Carl Sandburg in which steel is conceived of as made of smoke and blood, and who propounded this question to the Walrus and the Carpenter: " How can smoke, the lighter refuse of steel, be one of its constituents, and how can the smoke which drifts away from the chimney and the blood which flows in the steelmaker's veins be correlates in their relation to steel? " Where shall we match this precious gem? Over two centuries ago, Othello's cry after the death of Desdemona,

> " O heavy hour,
> Methinks it should now be a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon! "

provoked another intellectualist critic to enquire whether " the sun and moon can both together be so hugely eclipsed in any one heavy hour whatsoever; " but Rymer has been called " the worst critic that ever lived " for applying tests like these to the poetry of Shakespeare. Over a century ago a certain Abbé Morellet, unmoved by the music of Chateaubriand's description of the moon,—

> " She pours forth in the woods this great secret of melancholy which she loves to recount to the old oaks and the ancient shores of the sea,"—

asked his readers: " How can the melancholy of night be called a secret; and if the moon recounts it, how is it still a secret; and how does she manage to recount it to the old oaks and the ancient shores of the sea rather than to the deep valleys, the mountains, and the rivers? "

These are simply exaggerations of the inevitable consequence of carrying over the mood of actual life into the world of the

imagination. " Sense, sense, nothing but sense! " cried a great Austrian poet, " as if poetry in contrast with prose were not always a kind of divine nonsense. Every poetic image bears within itself its own certain demonstration that logic is not the arbitress of art." And Alfieri spoke for every poet in the world when he said of himself, " Reasoning and judging are for me only pure and generous forms of feeling." The trained economist, philosopher, or moralist, examining the ideas of a poet, is always likely to say: " These are not clearly thought out or logical ideas; they are just a poet's fancy or inspiration; " and that is the final praise of the poet. If the expert finds a closely reasoned treatise we may be sure that we shall find no poetry. It is a vision of reality, and not reality, imagination and not thought or morals, that the artist gives us; and his spiritual world, with all that it means for the soaring life of man, fades and disappears when we bring to it no other test than the test of reality.

These are some of the elementary reasons why those who demand of the poet a definite code of morals or manners—" American ideals," or " Puritanism," or on the other side, " radical ideas "—seem to me to show their incompetence as critics. How can we expect illumination from those who share the " typical American business man's " inherent inability to live in the world of fantasy which the poets have created, without the business man's ability to face the external facts of life and mould them to his will? These men are schoolmasters, pedants, moralists, policemen, but neither critics nor true lovers of the spiritual food that art provides. To the creative writers of America I should give a wholly different message from theirs. I should say to them: " Express what is in you, all that serene or turbulent vision of multitudinous life which is yours by right of imagination, trusting in your own power to achieve discipline and mastery, and leave the discussion of ' American ideals ' to statesmen, historians, and philosophers, with the certainty that if you truly express the vision that is in you, the statesmen, historians, and philosophers of the future will point to your work as a fine expression of the ' American ideals ' you have helped to create."

But it is no part of the critic's duty to lay down laws for

the guidance of the creator, though he may have insight enough to foresee some of the directions which literature is likely to take. He may even point out new material for the imagination of poets to feed on,—the beautiful folklore of our native Indians, the unplumbed depths of the Negro's soul, the poetry and wisdom of Asia (which it may be our chief destiny to interpret for the nations of Europe), the myth and story of the hundred races that are to make up the new America, and all the undiscovered coigns and crannies of our national life. I shall not say that these services are extraneous and unimportant, like furnishing the fountain-pen with which a great poem is written; but incursions into the geography of the imagination are incidental to the critic's main duty of interpreting literature and making its meaning and purpose clear to all who wish to love and understand it.

The first need of American criticism to-day is education in æsthetic thinking. It needs above all the cleansing and stimulating power of an intellectual bath. Only the drenching discipline that comes from intellectual mastery of the problems of æsthetic thought can train us for the duty of interpreting the American literature of the future. The anarchy of impressionism is a natural reaction against the mechanical theories and jejune text-books of the professors, but it is a temporary haven and not a home. The haphazard empiricism of English criticism and the faded moralism of our own will serve us no more. We must desert these muddy waters, and seek purer and deeper streams. In a country where philosophers urge men to cease thinking, it may be the task of the critic to revivify and reorganize thought. Only in this way can we gain what America lacks, the brain-illumined soul.

The second need of American criticism can be summed up in the word scholarship—that discipline of knowledge which will give us at one and the same time a wider international outlook and a deeper national insight. One will spring from the other, for the timid Colonial spirit finds no place in the heart of the citizen of the world; and respect for native talent, born of a surer knowledge, will prevent us alike from overrating its merits and from holding it too cheap. Half-knowledge is either too timid or too cocksure; and only out of this spiritual

discipline can come a true independence of judgment and taste.

For taste is after all both the point of departure and the goal; and the third and greatest need of American criticism is a deeper sensibility, a more complete submission to the imaginative will of the artist, before attempting to rise above it into the realm of judgment. If there is anything that American life can be said to give least of all, it is training in taste. There is a deadness of artistic feeling, which is sometimes replaced or disguised by a fervour of sociological obsession, but this is no substitute for the faculty of imaginative sympathy which is at the heart of all criticism. When the social historian is born, the critic dies; for taste, or æsthetic enjoyment, is the only gateway to the critic's judgment, and over it is a flaming signpost, " Critic, abandon all hope when this gate is shut."

> " To ravish Beauty with dividing powers
> Is to let exquisite essences escape."

Only out of the fusion of these three elements of taste, intellect, and knowledge can American criticism gain what in one of its manifestations is called " personality " and in another " style." Only in this way can it win in the battle against the benumbing chaos and the benumbing monotony of American art and life.

We are all cocksure but bewildered children in a world we cannot understand. We are all parvenus—parvenus on a new continent, on the fringes of which some have lived a little longer than others, but the whole of which has been encompassed by none of us for more than two or three generations; parvenus in a new world of steam and electricity, wireless and aeroplane, machinery and industry, which none of us has yet been able to subdue to a mould that satisfies our deepest cravings; parvenus in our culture, which still seems like a borrowed garment instead of flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. What is the good of all the instruments that our hands have moulded if we have neither the will nor the imagination to wield them for the uses of the soul? Not in this fashion shall we justify our old dream of an America that is the hope of the world. Here are hundreds of colleges and universities; why

not fill these empty barracks with scholars and thinkers? Here are a hundred races; why not say to them: "America can give you generous opportunity and the most superb instruments that the undisciplined energy of practical life has ever created, but in the spiritual fields of art, poetry, religion, culture, it has little or nothing to give you; let us all work together, learning and creating these high things side by side"? Here are more hearts empty and unfulfilled and more restless minds than the world has ever before gathered together; why not lead them out of their corrals, and find a fitting pasture for their brains and souls?

J. E. SPINGARN

GLOSSARY

The English language, extraordinarily rich and expressive in everything that concerns the practical or the imaginative life, suffers from the poverty and lack of precision of English æsthetic thought. It may therefore be useful to indicate briefly the special sense in which certain terms are used in this essay.

"*Spectator:* I should say that you have advanced a subtlety that is little more than a play on words.

"*Friend:* And I maintain that when we are speaking of the operations of the soul, no words can be delicate and subtle enough."—GOETHE.

Art—Any creation of the imagination, whether in the form of imaginative literature or of painting, sculpture, music, etc.

Artist—The creator of a work of art in any of its forms; not used in this essay in the narrower sense of painter or sculptor.

Taste—The faculty of imaginative sympathy by which the reader or spectator is able to re-live the vision of the artist, and therefore the essential pre-requisite to all criticism.

Criticism—Any expression of taste guided by knowledge and thought. (The critic's training in knowledge is scholarship, and his special field of thought æsthetics.)

Æsthetics—An ordered and reasoned conception of the meaning and purpose of art, intended for the guidance of the critic and not of the artist.

A Literary Theory—An isolated "idea" or theory in regard to imaginative literature, without reference to any ordered and

reasoned conception of its meaning and purpose.

Impressionist Criticism—Any expression of taste without adequate guidance of knowledge or thought.

Intellectualist (or dogmatic) criticism—Criticism based on the conception that art is a product of thought rather than of imagination, and that the creative fantasy of the artist can be limited and judged by the critic's pre-conceived theories; or in the more ornate words of Francis Thompson, criticism that is "for ever shearing the wild tresses of poetry between rusty rules."

The Intellectuals—All who lay undue stress on the place of intellect in life, and assume that the turbulent flux of reality can be tied up in neat parcels of intellectual formulæ.

Poetry—All literature in which reality has been transfigured by the imagination, including poetry in its narrower sense, the novel, the drama, etc.; used instead of "imaginative literature," not merely for the sake of brevity, but as implying a special emphasis on creative power.

Poet—A writer of imaginative literature in any of its forms; not used in this essay in the narrower sense of a writer of verse.

Learning—The accumulation of certain forms of knowledge as a basis for scholarship, but no more the main purpose of scholarship than his preparatory training is the sole object of the athlete or soldier.

Scholarship—The discipline and illumination that come from the intellectual mastery of a definite problem in the spiritual (as opposed to the practical) life of man.

Pedant—Any one who thinks that learning is the whole of scholarship.

J. E. S.

BOOKS BY J. E. SPINGARN

Prose:

Creative Criticism: Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste

Literary Criticism in the Renaissance (translated into Italian, with an introduction by Benedetto Croce)

Verse:

The New Hesperides and Other Poems

Edited:

Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century (three volumes)

Goethe's Literary Essays (with a foreword by Lord Haldane)

A Renaissance Courtesy Book: The Galateo of Giovanni della Casa

Essays of Sir William Temple

Essays in other volumes:

The Seven Arts and the Seven Confusions (in: A Modern Book of Criticism, edited by Ludwig Lewisohn)

Scholarship and Criticism (in: Civilization in the United States, edited by Harold E. Stearns)

American Criticism To-day (in: On American Books, edited by Francis Hackett)

Caroline and Jacobean Criticism (in: Cambridge History of English Literature)

Literary Criticism (in: Columbia University Lectures on Literature)

etc.

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